Indo-Israel relations

2281. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's growing closeness with Israel has created a feeling that it would give up its traditional friendship with Palestinians and also created misgivings among the Gulf countries and Arab world, which are strategically very important for India; and

(b) what action Government have taken in this regard to allay fear of these nations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) India's relations with Israel stand on their own and do not affect our historical and principled support of the Palestinian cause. This policy of steadfast support has been recognised by all the countries of the Arab world.

Closure of Passport Collection Centre at Mangalore

2282. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Passport Collection Centre in Mangalore has been closed;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to re-open the above passport collection centre?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) The Passport Application Collection Centre in Mangalore has not been closed.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Undertaking about Abu Salem

2283. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has given an undertaking to the Government of Portugal that Abu Salem, involved in Mumbai

blasts and 70 other cases in the country would not be given death penalty on his conviction after his deportation to India; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Section 34 C of the Indian Extradition Act, 1962 states that "Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, where a fugitive criminal, who has committed an extradition offence punishable with death in India, is surrendered or returned by a foreign State on the request of the Central Government and the laws of that foreign State do not provide for the death penalty for such an offence, such fugitive criminal shall be liable for punishment of imprisonment for life only for that offence." As per the Portuguese Constitution, no one can be extradited in respect of offences punishable by death penalty under the law of the State requesting extradition. Hence, the above provision of the Indian Extradition Act will become applicable.

Anti-Indian activities in Ladakh

2284. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the reported statement of the ITBP DG that Chinese have built a railway line connecting Beijing with the areas of Ladakh occupied by them; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government both at the diplomatic level and the national security angle to ensure that such anti-Indian activities at LAC are adequately curbed and national integrity is safeguarded?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Government has been informed that the statement referred to in part (a) of the question is incorrectly attributed to DG, ITBP.

(b) Government remains vigilant and takes all necessary and appropriate measures to safeguard the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of India.